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FATE AND I  
AND OTHER POEMS

Gerda Dalliba



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# Fate and I

And Other Poems

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Number 35.

*Gerda Dahlbom*  






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# FATE AND I AND OTHER POEMS

By  
Gerda Dalliba



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PS  
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TO  
MY FRIEND  
MRS. ELLA WHEELER WILCOX  
THIS LITTLE VOLUME  
IS GRATEFULLY  
DEDICATED

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## Fate and I

OH, you and I, Fate, are two gods, I trow!  
You, god of the future, and I, of now.

I watch to-night, with a fair delight,  
Over the mountains the waning light.  
Yet, when the day-beams stronger grow,  
It is you, yourself, who may lay me low!

Oh, you and I, Fate, are two gods, two kings!  
And Life is the spoil for which each flings  
The royal strain of his purple blood—  
Like in a wood, a panting flood  
O'er the wild woodlands leaps its way—  
I with to-night, and you with to-day!

And yet, as I watch in the spring sky warm  
The brooding heat of a thunder storm,  
Nor ever fear t'will not disappear:  
So I hold you calmly, though close and near!  
And, as deep mosses within a stream,  
To-night I lie by myself—and dream.

## Strength

WE cannot all be noble, Yet I ween,  
We all can have the strength that  
Atlas bore,  
And hold the Earth securely on our arm.  
They cry to me : " God's will be done,"—they  
Of little strength, but of tremendous faith.  
And with lips clenched to bleeding, I reply:  
" God's will be done."

Yet I have little faith :  
It seems to me, the tide has moments when  
It palpitates between the silver sands  
And the deep bodied bosom of the sea.  
So palpitates the soul 'tween life and death.  
We die more often than we think. Upon  
Each passion we are laid a limpéd corpse ;  
And are reborn to Earth alone in Thought ;  
And strength grows in us as the ruddy will  
Keeps emotions back from outward show,  
Pulls a smile across the face—and says :  
" I'm happy ! See, I'm smiling ! I can take  
Thy care unto me, as a summer plant  
Absorbs the moisture from the atmosphere.

My heart a canvas is: take thou and paint  
In thine own shade. My soul's a viol: play  
Thy music out upon me, and rejoice!  
I'm strong—for what I feel thou shalt not know."

## Sorrow

I SAW a woman bend her head  
Over a grave beneath a tree.  
Woman, I know thy love is dead !  
But still my love is dead to me.

I saw her lift a small white hand,  
And pass it slow across her eye.  
Woman—I know—I understand—  
Yet mourn we most for those who die ?

I saw her fix with tender care  
Flowers, with fragrance resting deep.  
Woman—there are no flowers there  
Where my love lies, and fell to sleep !

And suddenly I saw and heard  
A red-breast robin come that way,  
And—Oh my God ! There is no bird,  
Where rests my love, to wake the day !

Ah ! woman, can'st thou ever know,  
'Mid memories and grasses tall,  
That in my heart my love did grow  
Alone—and died there ? That is all !

## Love

LOVE was born of a thought, and a passion,  
Down in the Heart-world, far away ;  
Beneath the sweep of the Earth and  
Ocean—

Beating upon it night and day !

Beneath the sky, where God's hand trembled  
Dragging the planets into place.  
Beneath the court, where Heaven assembled,  
Seraph and Saint to see its face.

And all the universe coming in terror  
Gazed upon it—but named it good.  
God baptized it, and freed it from error,  
Giving its charge unto maidenhood.

## To Keats—A Sonnet

I THOUGHT, in the vast shade of yonder  
tree,

Endymion lay, upon his floweret bed—  
As o'er the darkening meadow and the sea  
The young moon rose triumphant overhead.  
And then you came, Keats, came straight unto me,  
With all your sweet perplexity of tone—  
Of what in dreamland distant far might be,  
And what upon this earth was felt and known.  
I wonder if you find now what you sought,  
And languished for, and found not and so died?  
No grand philosophy of deed, or thought,  
Was yours—Your ideals were the ones that hide  
Behind the clouds—the romances God wrought,  
To set within the spheres where saints abide!



## Rain

**T**HERE are tear-drops on the window pane!  
Who is weeping ? Heaven—  
What from thee can be withheld ?  
What grief unto thee given ?

# A Sea Myth

TO ———

**A**H, many a song has been tuned to the harp,  
With network of silvery rhyme.

Through the modulations of flat and sharp,

You may hear the heart-beat of time.

Ah, many a poet has dared to part,

The rose from its Southern clime,

And place an icicle next its heart,

In singing a song sublime.

And though the Sea has been lost in its foam,

I dare to sing of the Sea—

And then my fancy wandering home,

Has brought back my verse to thee.

## I

Under Eubœa's isle,

Under Jupiter's smile,

Under the Earth—God's wile,

Making triumph and trial,

The home of Neptune rests in turbulent seas.

The waves beat on the shore

Of Earth that Heaven bore

Upon its breast of yore,

Yet knoweth not of Ocean's mysteries.

## II

Waves are foamed in white  
On a summer's night ;  
They mould themselves in shapes of young half  
moons.  
Before the Sun departed  
And Earth was broken-hearted,  
It shone there with full glory at its noons.

## III

Yet the deep of green  
That is seldom seen  
Lies laced in between,  
The surface Sea, and its endless, fathomless bed.  
And there the mermaids fair,  
With floating sea-swept hair,  
Still lull the drowned with songs that please the  
dead.

## IV

Under the Earth and Sky,  
Under fair Greece's eye,  
Homes of the Sea-Gods lie,  
As oft in times of Greek supremacy olden.  
In under the white foam's breast,  
In under the green lights pressed,  
Where the surge has sunk to rest,  
In under Eubœa, Neptune's palace is golden.

V

Golden palaces,  
Golden lattices,  
Golden trellices,  
And yet, a golden throne for Neptune's seat.  
With golden courts below  
Where mystic mermaids show  
All of their woman part, with beauty sweet.

VI

Golden chairs for queens,  
Nymphs of stately mien,  
Upon whose faces fair the monarch looks,  
With Spirit-Solitudes  
There stolen from their woods  
And from their distant rivers, lakes, and brooks.

VII

Lights that tinted strange,  
With an opal's range  
Of colors, habitate the watery way.  
And yet they are the sprites  
That ship-men see by nights,  
And they who sleep, and find their rest by day.

### VIII

Mosses deep, unseen,  
Old, and yet as green  
As verdant meadows under soft spring skies.  
And some like yellow grains,  
Where the young harvest reigns  
In tinted orange and in golden dyes.

### IX

Shells with voices sent  
From the reeds that blent  
Pan to merriment,  
As when from out the woods he laughing ran;  
And yet, with pensive strain,  
Where wilful nymphs complain—  
And of a great love-pain  
Born to creation, when the world began.

### X

Phosphorescent plants,  
Clammy cold sea-damps,  
And all the pungent life that Nature breeds  
Where men can never know,  
And where the poets go  
Alone when thitherward a soft dream leads.

## XI

Gorgons with icy glance  
Frozen within a trance  
To motionless inertia doomed to stand  
Like now, on sea-shore capes,  
The snow is piled in shapes  
Of livid monsters, by the Ice King's hand.

## XII

Sirens, singing sweet  
Melodies, full meet  
For lover's bowers, under fair moon-beam ;  
And yet whose perfumed breath  
From roseate lips means death  
To those who listen to their song—and dream.

## XIII

Harpies, woman-eyed,  
Looking wan and wide,  
Yet forever tied  
To foul bird-bodies, claw, and flapping wing—  
And every creature there,  
Both horrible and fair,  
That the deep waters bear  
Where they upon the Seashore's bosom fling.

#### XIV

In the spacious hall  
Where the shades would fall  
Covering over all—  
If haply the warm Sun were there to die—  
Bright-blue lights from the wave  
Had colored all the cave  
Where Proteus and Triton sat on high.

#### XV

Poloyphemus—wide,  
Heavy, tired-eyed—  
Sat by Glaucus' side  
While they held converse there somewhat apart;  
When suddenly there came  
A flash of greenish flame  
That lit the cave and shivered every heart.

#### XVI

Amphitrite the pure  
Hung her head demure  
On Neptune's knee, and trembled with affright;  
For it was Circe there,  
But her wild look was fair,  
For she had banished Scylla, the past night.

## XVII

Now the afternoon  
Lulled the cave with droon  
Of heavy waves that roaréd on and on,  
When Neptune rose with state,  
And for his bridal-mate  
Took from the deep a regal sapphire crown;

## XVIII

Placing the shimmering band,  
With his feeble hand,  
Upon her head, while crimson was her face ;  
And every eye was cast  
And fixé firm and fast  
Upon the wonder of her perfect grace.

## XIX

Sea-Gods standing there  
Felt their wild hearts stir  
Gazing straight at her,  
Who long ago had come from out the West,  
When Neptune's monarchy  
Had threatened all the Sea—  
Not yielding quietly  
Unto his sway upon the waters pressed.



## XX

For in Cronus' reign,  
 Ere the Gods were slain,  
 By Neptune—Pluto—Jupiter—the three  
 Great sons who stole away  
 Their Father's—Cronus'—sway,  
 Oceanus ruled all the boundless Sea.

## XXI

Oceanus old,  
 Hoary Tethys cold,  
 Pontus there, the bold,  
 Then dwelt beyond the bound'ries of the Earth  
 Within a western cave,  
 And felt a tidal wave  
 Upon their Kingdom lave  
 Of the old Dynasty, with Neptune's birth.

## XXII

Nereus there wed—  
 Though on a sea-bed—  
 Doris, a nymph, who bred  
 Fifty fair daughters to the dying race ;  
 And one was as a dream,  
 With golden hair a-stream,  
 And soft, fair eyes a-beam—  
 And the new East-God gazed upon her face.

### XXIII

For upon a day,  
Now long passed away,  
Winds and waves astray  
Swept o'er the land that kills the setting Sun.  
And where the nights are found  
And on the drear Earth bound,  
There rose a battle sound  
Of Neptune's arms, and the old reign was done.

### XXIV

Far from out the East,  
Like a frenzied beast,  
The monarch Neptune rode full wrathfully,  
With dolphins golden-maned  
And iron-hoofed, and trained  
To bear the royal chariot o'er the Sea;

### XXV

While the Earth upreared  
Forest-locks, and feared  
For her far lands that neared  
The bound'ries of her furthest western coasts:  
For with vast Time, that goes,  
New Gods will rise—and rose,  
And fierce with battle throes  
Upon the old, who seemed like withered ghosts.

## XXVI

And the myriad throng  
Pass like notes along  
In Progression's song,  
Sung through the age-chords, and by parting life.  
Each God with his libation  
The rise of each new nation,  
Each man (a whole creation)  
That born—gives birth and dies within the strife.

## XXVII

On that day now set  
In the amulet  
Of the dead past, Neptune had fought the throne  
Of the old Dynasty  
For the supremacy  
Across the boundless sea,  
And then proclaimed both East and West his own.

## XXVIII

On the last blue line  
Of the western brine,  
Markéd straight and fine,  
There rose a low cry as of agony.  
For while the old Gods fought  
They still were overwrought  
By the vast strength and thought  
Of Neptune of the Younger Dynasty.

### XXIX

By Neptune's trident hand  
Unyielding Fate did stand,  
With a firm command  
Upon her lips, and new thought in her eyes ;  
And perchance the old Gods saw  
That they must now withdraw,  
Or only felt the law  
Of withered flesh upon their cheeks and thighs.

### XXX

But the victor—he  
Pauséd suddenly—  
A daughter of Nereus old stood there ;  
'Twas she who was the dream,  
With her fair eyes a-beam  
And her gold hair a-stream,  
And mosses caught upon her shoulders bare.

### XXXI

From his chariot far  
Like a shooting star  
Descended he to where dull waters rise,  
And dripping from the foam  
He raised her—bore her home—  
The starlight playing in his wayward eyes.

### XXXII

Now, the afternoon  
Lulled the cave with droon  
Of heavy waves and blue and emerald light ;  
And the long years had sped  
Fast o'er their bridal-bed ;  
And waved the shadows of each happy night,

### XXXIII

Since upon that day,  
Now long passed away,  
Winds and waves astray  
Swept o'er the land that kills the setting Sun ;  
And he the old Gods fought,  
And them had overwrought,  
And his own prize, fair Amphitrite, had won

### XXXIV

While the sapphire crown  
Brilliancy shot down  
Of long blue shadows on the fair girl's form,  
And Juno's peacock dyes  
Still glistened from her eyes,  
And on her cheeks swift raged the crimson storm.

### XXXV

Now, where fields are held,  
And the forests felled  
Clean by the axe, and small birds winged to nest,  
Sang out a sunset bell,  
And the wild shadows fell  
With the fond Sun's farewell;  
And all the meadow-workers sought their rest.

### XXXVI

Underneath the lands  
Where Eubœa stands,  
The dew-time fell, but with no outward show,  
And there waves resonant,  
And green and blue and constant,  
Still beat with steady, wailing, ceaseless flow

### XXXVII

Then with the dying day,  
Sea-Gods stole away—  
The River-Gods, and Nymphs of Fountains—  
Naiads,  
To depths below, above—  
Sang sweet unto her love  
Fair Amphitrite, beneath the rising Pleiads.

Song of Amphitrite to Neptune.

“ I am the growing-one  
Born of the Flowing-One ;  
Over the glowing-one  
I sweep my long hair.  
In the East tremblingly,  
Faltering and musically,  
With low head bendingly,  
I kiss Neptune there.

“ Born in the western cave,  
Deep, I my bosom lave  
Deep in the briny wave,  
To make it gleam white.  
I command the waves’ roaring,  
The large Sea-gulls’ soaring—  
But all this ignoring,  
I bend to thy sight.

“ The mystic revealing  
Of infinite feeling  
Upon me is stealing,  
Oh Neptune ! Oh King !  
The wild ruby’s burning  
To dull red is turning,  
Beside the all-yearning,  
That I to thee bring.

“ The unsteady motion  
Of old Father Ocean  
Bringeth no notion  
Of glory—of space.  
Upon thy heart lying,  
Upon thy lips sighing,  
Oh Neptune ! and dying,  
I bury my face ! ”

### XXXVIII

Far, as in a dream,  
O'er sea and lake and stream  
The moon rose ; over town and lane and field ;  
And unto babes new-born,—  
Old people, tired, worn,—  
A soft beneficence its rays did yield.

### XXXIX

But below—below—  
Where the waters flow,  
With their ripples slow,  
In silver on the dark heart of the deep,  
Pure Amphitrite's fair charm  
Lay on the hoary arm  
Of her King Neptune, who did soundly sleep.



### XL

High within a tower  
Swung the midnight hour  
From off a church-clock on village green ;  
And far into the night,  
As souls in search of light,  
The steeples in the sky did rise and lean.

### XLI

But, Oh the briny foam  
And crested wave, where roam  
The tossed wrecks of broken ships once sailed !  
The North wind reaching far  
To South, from polar star,  
Upon th' infinite breast of Ocean wailed.

### XLII

In the spacious cave,  
Underneath the wave,  
The anxious Sea-Queen turned from side to side,  
Fair Amphitrite, the pure.  
And what hath woke thee ? “ Sure  
Thy monarch sleepeth well beneath the tide.”

### XLIII

Tears fell from her face—  
What a fair, wondrous grace  
There is in weeping! Quiet lay he there,  
While o'er his wayward beard,  
And long, and strong, and seared,  
Her sweet lips fell, and on his brow and hair.

### XLIV

On the bounteous Earth  
Fair Morn had her birth  
In regal splendor of a Sun's fresh grace,  
That in the sky was bound.  
Upon the Earth was found  
The dew, and light upon the mountains' face.

### XLV

But under the Sea  
Lay a stern mystery—  
The monarch there raised not his lordly head.  
Upon his body prone  
Lay Amphitrite alone—  
She wept her love—her Neptune—who was dead.

## Rondeau Redouble

**T**HERE is no strong yet unfulfilled desire,  
Thought is the Slave of Mind, and  
Dream of Soul,  
The Heart is master of its burning fire,  
And these three monarchs have supreme  
control.

Within all spheres there is no mystic goal  
To which sane complex Thought cannot  
aspire—

All Ages unto progress hand their scroll :  
There is no strong yet unfulfilled desire.

Sweet Dream need use no artifice t' attire  
Drear Life in beauteous garb. Her aureole  
Will lend the pale face a celestial fire—  
Thought is the Slave of Mind, and Dream  
of Soul.

The emotional Heart, it is still great and  
whole;  
Its own musician, it can wake the lyre  
Of yearning, where the mighty tone-waves  
roll,—  
The Heart is master of its burning fire.

The Heart, the Mind, the Soul, they are entire  
Rulers of joy. The Heart, the Mind, the  
Soul ;  
For they shall ever reach toward something  
higher :  
And these three monarchs have supreme  
control.

And they were monarchs when the body stole  
Into existence, and did strength acquire.  
And they are monarchs when the grand bells  
toll  
A lingering farewell o'er the funeral pyre.  
They have no unfulfilled desire.

## Villanelle

UPON my heart my lady lies,  
Her hair is blown across my cheek,  
And blinded are my tearless eyes.

Oh God ! a voice within me cries,  
My sinking breast has grown but weak ;  
Upon my heart my lady lies !

Vain are all prayers, and wishing sighs,  
“ Her hair forbids my lips to speak.”  
And blinded are my tearless eyes.

The strong resistance in me dies,  
Before her face my soul is meek—  
Upon my heart my lady lies.

Her mouth that burns upon me tries  
My love to agony to pique,  
And blinded are my tearless eyes.

Dear rhapsody of rhapsodies,  
Dear Heaven that I dared not seek,  
Upon my heart my lady lies,  
And blinded are my tearless eyes !

# A Prayer to Orithyia

(*A Ballad*)

'**T**IS Aquilo in the tree,  
Beauteous maiden list and hear!  
For he doth sing heart feelingly  
To a fair one he loves dear.  
Beauteous maiden lend an ear  
To his wild love's northern strain,  
Grave, impassioned, and austere;  
Full of anger, full of pain!

Hear the wild blast: it is he!  
Feel the snowflake: 'tis his tear!  
'Tis his yearning strife for thee.  
At the tempest have no fear,  
'Tis thy lover's wooing, dear:  
Madness he cannot restrain—  
Grave, impassioned, and austere;  
Full of anger, full of pain!

Orithyia, glorious is his plea,  
Decked in language harsh and drear,  
And not fit the garb to be  
Of his love, at least sincere.  
In an iceberg atmosphere  
Grows a powerful hurricane—  
Grave, impassioned, and austere;  
Full of anger, full of pain!

### Endop

Emotion, nymph, thou can'st revere,  
Though return not, nor retain :  
Grave, impassioned, and austere ;  
Full of anger, full of pain !

## On the Death Mask of a Poet

**F**EATURES dead with mouth forever  
Silent as a frozen river.  
Lips that never wake, nor quiver—  
Never more with life's light, never.

Sunken cheek, and brow projecting,  
O'er the great Mind's heart, reflecting  
On the future, and expecting  
Death which now upon it lies !  
Lips where unrepressed Desire  
Built herself an altar-fire,  
Rising ever higher—higher—  
Only satiate with the skies !

Straight and aquiline and slender  
Nostrils that revibrate—tender—  
All the fine emotions render,  
That pass in and through the Soul.  
Chin, that if the dead were risen,  
Would denote a large precision,  
Which would conquer world or vision  
Through the vastness of control.

Eye-brows great and massive, lying  
On the forehead. Eye-balls trying  
To express the bosom's sighing,  
When the poet suffered dying.



# A Night in the Michigan Wild

**H**ID within the deep wood of a Michigan  
wild

I have seen a small river couched down  
like a child

At the foot of great pine trees which, stretching  
above,

Pay the sky, as the river prays them, for its love.

And upon that small river bank, winding and  
bending

Amid pine trees, and fir trees, and beech never  
ending,

The wild roses are clustered, and sunbeams are  
too,

And the shadows of night fall majestically  
through

The joined branches, and touch it! Ah wait!  
Let me try

To describe that weird scene, where the North  
beauties lie.

Here the dome of the heavens is deeper and  
clearer,

And yet, even the grey of the dull days bends  
nearer

The world here, than within the soft tropical  
South;  
And still further away at the wide river's mouth  
The North skies and the waters have met, and  
the still  
Of their passion-embrace is not broken, until  
The fond wind has at last found the long finger  
tips  
Of the trees and then presses them with its  
moist lips.  
And still looking to landward, the far rugged  
haze  
Of the higher hills rises upon one's rapt gaze,  
That will shroud with the veil of the soft morn-  
ing mist  
All the bright inland lakes at their feet, and will  
list  
To the break of their waters upon their own  
brink,  
While wild roses grow redder and redder, and  
sink  
'Neath the blushing within their calm, fair river  
glass  
At the beauty they see in themselves. But  
alas!

That the ferns must be hid in their close and  
wild wood,  
Which alone for the past generations have stood  
All unseen in their hermit-like silence, austere  
And unchanged in the Spring and the cold dying  
year.

A dull, dark night had come to the river, as fast  
As if one might be watching a round sun full  
past  
Its burnt horizon waning, and ah! one might  
feel  
One had entered the heart of all nature's ideal!  
While adown the stream's current, a bark-boat  
was drifting  
Slow, because the monotonous sound of uplifting  
And the dropping of oars on the surface was  
still,  
And the tide of the river bore it, by its will,  
On and on, to the great Lake Superior—where  
It still mingles with waters so deep from the air,  
That one hardly can feel their immensity, while  
In their calm on the shore they may ripple and  
smile.  
And yet slow, slow, but constantly moving along,

The bark-boat and the strong tide were drifting  
with song

Of the evening—to where hid away in the deep  
Of the distance and dark, the great lake lay  
asleep.

Now the woods, even pine trees, and fir trees,  
seemed more

Rich and luminous far, on the great waters'  
shore—

And one dreaded, yet longed for that darkness  
and gloom,

As the soul of man dreads and yet longs for  
the tomb.

The prow was straight set, and the roses and light  
Of the evening far back were forgotten in night—  
Yet the girl in the boat, with her finely poised ear,  
Tho' her soul was far sent into dreamland,  
could hear

A wild music—for music was rising—from  
where?

From the great reaching dark, and the night  
and the air—

And a music that blended so much with the scene,  
That its harmonies flowed forth in dark and in  
green

Of the far-stretching forests, with rolling chords  
flung

From the region of mystery, whence they were  
sprung—

Till at last it grew calmer and sweeter—so sweet  
That an angel in listening might hear the heart  
beat

Of a love in its tone, as if losing the sound  
It had lost the weird wail of the darkness, and  
found

All the quiet of Heaven—where souls being  
free

Will sing ever—sing always—from mere ecstasy!

And yet then—and as if with a pitying thought—  
In a cloud of soft melody—back it had brought  
The girl's soul unto earth—with no too harsh a  
tone :

The melodious minor, the soft wind hath blown  
O'er the face of the flowers—before the white  
snow

Of the winters will come, and the dear summers  
go—

And yet——

\* \* \* \* \*

It was only a Heavenly scene,  
With the large night hung close, like a mist veil,  
    between;  
And the music was only the heard, clearer part  
Of th' unrealized yearnings within her own  
    heart.  
Then the maiden awoke, while the bark-boat  
    went on,  
Out of night, out of forest—and into the dawn!

## “Yesterday and To-morrow Morn ”

**T**WO daughters to old Time are  
born—

Yesterday and To-morrow Morn ;  
And their Mother is To-day.  
(One wears a garment new and gay,  
And the other old and torn.)

For before the world began,  
And the Earth had dreamt of Man,  
In a region far away,  
Father Time had wed To-day  
In meadows soft where fair **brooks ran.**

And she never leaves his side,  
She his old and faithful bride,  
Tho' his hoary locks grow young,  
When the daylight has begun,  
Till the misty even-tide.

But the years are going fast,  
And the Future and the Past  
Are the wilful children sent,  
When To-day and Time are blent  
In a union great and vast.

Now one daughter is so fair  
She has moon-light in her hair.  
And her laughter is the trees,  
Swaying gently in the breeze,  
Softly waving here and there!

But the other is as cold  
As a flower growing old,  
And withered in a damp, dark, shade—  
And yet there is a perfume made  
From such flowers—so they hold.



## A Feeling

A FEELING is a rain-bow in the sky  
Of life, where many tints and colors vie  
And blend, the whole great arch to  
glorify—

Emotions of the grand and noble heart,  
Planned in divine and overflowing art,  
Each and yet all perform their separate part.

They are the tints and colors, many hues  
Of heartfelt joys and griefs, smile-shines, tear-  
dews,  
Of pinks and yellows, crimsons, and bright-blues!

Nor can God's promise of no flood adorn  
Or cross the firmament for us that mourn,  
Unless it be by colored rain-bows born.

Nor can a feeling ever be complete,  
Unless all strong emotions join and meet,  
And all their different harmonies make sweet!

## Would'st Thou Speak to Me, Bright Day?

**W**OULD'ST thou speak to me,  
bright day?—

Me of griefs, and me of pains ;  
Me, where all the heart's soft strains  
Sound a discord on the ear ?  
Hark ! do I thy voice still hear ?  
Would'st thou speak to me, bright day ?

Would'st thou cease thine own wild play  
With the sun-beams, golden bright ;  
With all joy, and all delight,  
With all gayety and glee ?  
Would'st thou stop to speak to me ?  
Would'st thou cease thine own wild play ?

Ah ! Thou speak'st ; thy voice is gay !  
But I cannot hear it's tone.  
Cease my spirit—cease your moan—  
For one moment silence all :  
Let me listen to that call—  
Ah ! Thou speak'st ; thy voice is gay !

## Woman

**C**OULD woman's heart but add one strain  
Of strength, still all its sweet retain,  
    Its pearly streams would surely break  
Into a glorious sun-set lake,  
Where passion-waves would not be free,  
But guarded, kept most tenderly  
To add their force to under-tide,  
And make one feeling grand and wide !

## A Secret—A Sonnet

WHAT is this secret hidden and concealed  
Past all the days that wake and come  
and go—

Past wayward winds that in the spring-time blow,  
And past the snows in Winter's heart congealed—  
Past sun-rise, and the endless, restless flow  
Of rivers bearing constant, on and on,—  
Past moon-rise and the turbulence of dawn,  
Forever breaking on the world below?  
Unknown to all the little leaves and blooms,  
Untold to all the giant elms and palms,  
Unpictured to the panting light that swoons  
Thro' woods and forests, reaching to cool  
calms;  
Undreaming of the quiet of the tombs,  
It has within its breast no hopes—no balms!

## Fall

**T**HIS is the time when the old Summer  
bendeth

Her head to receive a vast crown of red  
gold.

This is the time when the blossom still sendeth  
A fragrance that proveth it dying or old.

Ah, the soft rain that the garden still tendeth,  
Now serveth it only with kisses turned  
cold!

This is the time when the grass on the meadows,  
The leaf on the tree, and the heat in the year,  
Steal far far away, on the tip of the shadows,  
To waver a moment and then disappear.

Asters that seem like the newly grieved widows  
Will weep their past loves, with a ravishing  
tear.

This is the time when the colors and blends of  
them

Gleam ruddy on apples from the morns to  
the eves,

While wild leaves slow fade to a brown on the  
ends of them,

And gold groweth great in the heart of the  
sheaves.  
Tired days wane, with the burning red Suns of  
them,  
Where the harvest Moon smiles and her white  
bosom heaves.

## A Mood

CALM the morning falls from Heaven,  
Dim and over-spread with clouds,  
And the mountain-tops are driven  
Back into their mists of shrouds.

And sweet rest is on the valleys,  
Weary of their swaying grass;  
For the sun far eastward tarries,  
And the winds no longer pass

To and fro—but all are sleeping  
Quiet in the soft gray sky;  
And the peaceful Heavens are weeping—  
It would save my heart, could I !

## A Sonnet

WHAT are these mad repinings?—  
Promises

Of the full harvests, of the golden grain  
Of passions, ripened in the fields of pain?  
In vain my mind my heart admonishes—  
The past is dead; each day astonishes  
The world by rising gloomily or fair.  
The sun sinks fire, yet meager hint is there  
Of what the Morrow's bosom nourishes—  
And tho' the tears may rise and fall as fast  
As tempest waves within a boundless sea,  
Or drop the rains when skies are over-cast,  
Still time is speeding and unchanged by me.  
Then leave the wayward Future and the Past;  
And let me sit and dream awhile—of thee!



## A Ballad

THE hour grew late, the guests still sate  
Around the bridal board.

The wines were gone, the festal song  
Had died with its last chord.

### II

The bride beamed fair; behind her chair

The groom stood bent and still.

Up rose a sire in war's attire :

“ A story by thy will!”

### III

Loud rang the cry of ecstasy.

“ Pray speak,” the fair bride said.

His face gleamed pale—“ I tell a tale

Of one who now is dead.”

### IV

His eyes stared strange, they went the range

Of space as sentinel's round.

But as he broke the trance, and spoke,

They rested on the ground.

## V

“Thou wert a child, who laughed and smiled  
With lips as sweet as now.  
Thy family dwelt by the sea,  
On a cliff's projecting brow.

## VI

“Thy family dwelt by the sea,  
On rocks that reach the wave.  
Thy brothers made sand-wells, and played,  
(There stood thy mother's grave.)

## VII

“Three boys there were, and thou the fair :  
One had a patient soul ;  
The next breathed forth, as wind from north,  
With power, sweep and roll,

## VIII

“And worked by hand, o'er fruits of land,  
With honesty and care.  
Then came another, the last third brother,  
And thou, bright bride, the fair.

## IX

“ Thy next in age, like to a sage,  
Had brain of regal thought.  
In wide book-lore, no man knew more ;  
And vast his heart was wrought.

## X

“ Yet as a tree that restlessly  
Is swayed by every wind,  
Wild fancies took vast hold, and shook  
The quiet of his mind.

## XI

“ He loved thee well ; thou hast heard tell  
His love, by passion’s flow  
Of kisses that broke on thee when woke  
A spring bud flaked with snow.

## XII

“ But after the field rich grain did yield ;  
Nor scythe was worked nor plow ;  
With the dead year did disappear  
Thy brother—and knowest thou how ?

### XIII

“ O’er this calm age rash war did rage  
In lands where set of sun  
Warns golden bright approach of night,  
When our day is begun.

### XIV

“ The countries all gave clarion call  
For humanity’s stern cause,  
To break the chains of base kings’ reigns,  
That fettered feeble laws.

### XV

“ I braved the fight, while left and right,  
Close pressed in thick array  
The men fell fast before the blast  
Of shots that came our way.

### XVI

“ The war smoke black made me give back,  
And paused me for the night;  
Then rushing on, in blear of dawn,  
I stumbled in my flight,

## XVII

“ And fell with wrath. Across my path  
A soldier's body lay.  
He seemed as dead, with bleeding head  
From the victorious day.

## XVIII

“ I pressed the hair, with no soft care,  
From off the forehead high.  
His limbs were stark, his eye gleamed dark.  
I knew that death was nigh.

## XIX

“ I could not brook the searching look  
That from his eye did roll,  
As unto Death. I held my breath ;  
It scorched my very soul.

## XX

“ And back I fell, with piercing yell,  
When lights the fields did lave.  
The features shone—thy brother's own—  
God rest him in his grave!

## XXI

“ Now giant Time three years sublime  
    Had marked by Progress’ hand,  
Ere from war stern my heart might turn  
    Once more to its own land.

## XXII

“ Shone ocean wide with moon’s fresh pride,  
    Ere our ship kissed the quay.  
When summer’s bloom thrice decked his  
    tomb  
Straight came I unto thee.

## XXIII

“ But tho’ I came and breathed thy name,  
    In greeting to thee here,  
I could not bear the grief to stir  
    For one thou didst hold dear.

## XXIV

“ Yet dry the tear, for o’er his bier  
    Vain Glory placed her rose.  
To jubilee add victory  
    Of his—nor weep his woes.”

## XXV

Each head was bent, as right grief went  
To each heart with the tale.  
The look of age on the war-sage  
Grew deep; the bride grew pale.

## XXVI

While the groom's face had lost the grace  
Of youth and beauty's glow.  
The sage spoke on, in growing dawn,  
The groom's pulse beat but slow.

## XXVII

He held control, tho', o'er his soul,  
As King o'er subject land,  
And no one knew how his veins grew  
Great on the firm white hand.

## XXVIII.

The stare of eye was his reply  
Of mourning for the dead,  
Till the sweet bride, close by his side,  
Lifted to him her head.

### XXIX

The tender grace of her fair face  
    Startled the man in him ;  
His conscience woke, his deep voice broke  
    On day, then rising dim.

### XXX

“ Thy brother died. I by his side  
    Had watched his dying breath ;  
And still far more—I vowed and swore  
    That I should be his death.

### XXXI

“ For in my past, and hidden fast  
    As secrets e’er can be,  
There lay a sin that entered in  
    Became a mystery.

### XXXII

“ As floods that run to Western sun  
    Sing not the far East’s song,  
So in my breast I held in rest  
    The secret of a wrong.



### XXXIII

“ And yet one night, by moon’s pale light,  
We drank—both he and I—  
At tavern’s round, and there he found  
That secret I put by.

### XXXIV

“ My secret cast into the past  
Was open to his gaze,  
As all the moods of life, like woods,  
Are seen by fierce fire’s blaze.

### XXXV

“ And then ere long it grew a wrong  
Upon myself and thee;  
As one apart he judged the heart  
Full kind, that sinned in me.

### XXXVI

“ But when it came, that thy fair name  
Should wedded be with mine,  
I knew as brother he would discover  
My fault to thee and thine.

### XXXVII

“ Yet, still I strove, and went to rove  
At far, to rise above  
My thoughts of thee, the agony  
To crave thee for my love.

### XXXVIII

“ And then the war swept the land o’er;  
I fought with desperate might,  
And in the blare of battle air  
I felt my heart grow light.

### XXXIX

“ Far hid from sight, and as in night  
Was all, yes, all but smoke.  
The sun seemed dead, yet rose full red  
When through the line we broke.

### XL

“ Right by my side stood he who died—  
Thy brother in its light.  
White gleamed his face (in hour of grace  
May it for me gleam white)!

### XLI

“ He stood there still. My heart beat till  
I felt it in my throat ;  
For thou wert mine, if in the line  
I killed him (none should note).

### XLII

“ But then from far, as 'twere a star,  
A blaze fell from the sky.  
The ranks rushed on, and in the dawn  
By another did he die.

### XLIII

“ And so with Fate, tho' oft we wait  
Thro' weary life for peace,  
From trial or dread, that Chance has bred,  
'Tis Chance will bring release.

### XLIV

“ And I fought on, out of the dawn,  
With mine own heart in me ;  
My battle-fire was my desire  
That yearned yet for thee.

### XLV

“ My battle-field I would not yield—  
Not for his life nor mine—  
Was smiles that play full blithely  
And on thy fair lips shine.

### XLVI

“ My battle throes were eyes that rose—  
Thine eyes that hung above,  
In mirrored art, o’er my rapt heart ;  
My fight was for thy love.

### XLVII

“ And now, fair bride, here by my side,  
Wilt lay thy hand in mine ?  
Forgive the wrong that, cleanséd long  
In sorrow, may decline ? ”

### XLVIII

The guests sate still, to wait her will,  
To know her answer there.  
The wines were gone, and festal song ;  
The groom bent o’er her chair.

\* \* \* \* \*

## XLIV

The tale is old ; the grain is gold

At peace now by the sea.

The bride was young ; her answer sprung—

“ Yes ! For thou lovedst me ! ”

## The Moon and the World

A BEAUTIFUL Moon rose proudly one  
night,  
And looked on herself with a pensive  
delight.

And the white of her skin was as pure and soft,  
As when she lay on the Saviour's loft.  
And she saw from the deep of a pool in a dale,  
Where weird lights glisten and waters turn pale,  
The very effect of her loveliness, sent  
Into their struggling and discontent  
And sluggish uprisings.

And the Moon,  
As she looked on herself, could almost swoon  
From the ideal spirit-like visage seen  
Through the tangled boughs of the forests green.  
And she said to the World: "You have grown old!  
And your fast excess of rotation has told  
Upon you since you followed the sun  
With a mad extreme when the day's begun.  
And even the springs that pass over your heart  
Have left the cold leaves of the autumn to start  
Under the feet of the winters, and lie  
Dead on the ground where the snows pass by."

The old World stopped, and held her breath,  
And thought on life—and creation—and death ;  
And then she replied with the dark night's moan  
To the beautiful Moon in an undertone:  
“Yes, oh Moon ! but you froze in your rest ;  
While children sleep sweetly upon my breast.”

# A Child—A Tale in Rhyme

## I

**T**HERE was once a little boy's spirit born  
To a world of merriment all forlorn ;  
For the beautiful mother God gave him  
Had a sparkling eye and a conscience dim.  
And when she saw the little red thing  
Lying near to her, without feeling a sting  
Of conscience, she feared least a care  
Should rob her of one golden hair.  
And she frowned on the lace in the richly  
decked room ;  
And the fresh flowers there that were all abloom  
Looked sadly down on the little boy sent  
Into that world of merriment.

## II

But the little boy grew, and bye and bye  
When a sturdy look came and he stood so high  
He could touch her bed, the mother proved,  
The doctor advised that he be removed.  
So in a nursery kept far apart  
He was given all that could please the heart



Of a little boy. All kinds of fair  
And beautiful picture books were there,  
And toys and sweets of every kind  
To fascinate a childish mind.  
And, tho' the nurse would often scold,  
'Twas better than the days of old.

### III

But suddenly there came a day  
When the beautiful toys were thrown away,  
And the Mother Goose book and the pictures all  
Of the goblins short and the giants tall  
Had no more fantasy, joy nor dread  
For the little boy, and his curly head  
Lay heavy in his dimpled hand  
With thoughts he could not understand;  
Until from out the dazzling black  
Of blinded eyes a thought came back—  
That, passing by, he oft had seen  
A dark recess behind a screen.

### IV

And then, at last, he knew not how,  
The screen was pushed aside—and now  
He stood upon a fur-rugged floor,  
Oblivious of screen and door,

Or who should come, or who should see—  
He stole into the library !  
At first he did not like the hue  
Of the dark-covered books—so grand and new,  
And dull and strange and piled so high,  
He could not reach them with his eye,  
Until he came to where was placed  
A bookcase filled for childhood's taste.

## V

Ah, what he read! And all the hours  
Were from November till the flowers  
Began to bloom again, and he  
Was deep in Fairy mystery.  
He knew the tale of every maid  
By some wild witch or wretch waylaid;  
And then of all the charmed knights  
Who fought and helped them in their plights.  
And so intense was all his store  
Of myths and ancient goblin lore,  
He felt and lived within their age,  
As in his own world lives the sage.

## VI

And far, and far, in childish dreams  
He went to where the moonlight streams

Upon young lovers, and a book  
Brings thought into an old man's look ;  
And in his own, own little way  
He pushed the clouds of life away,  
And saw the angels in the sky.  
There are two times before we die  
When we can see far more than men—  
The first is childhood's dreaming, then  
When we grow old. But no one knew  
The strange, weird way in which he grew.

## VII

But one night late the little boy woke ;  
The bubble force of a dream had broke  
The sleep from his eyes, and a goblin tale  
Shone in them as the moon did pale.  
And his hand went up, and he rubbed his eyes.  
His bed was placed so he looked on the skies,  
And he, gazing, thought the star-beam he saw  
Was a witch's silver hair. Her claw  
Was the great dark tree. And a wee sob came  
For the maid—he could not remember her  
name—  
Who was under the powerful witch's spell,  
And his head no more on the pillow fell.

## VIII

And the starlight waned not nor died away,  
But grew so bright that he thought the day  
Was coming in at his window. And soon  
The pale, ghost-shivering, awe-striking moon  
Would grow dim ! So he waited and sat as still  
As if he were sleeping full soundly until  
His nurse should wake him. But fairy dreams  
came,

And he did so wish to remember the name  
Of that poor, witch-tempted, beautiful maid  
Of the fairy tale ! And the book was laid  
'Way, 'way down in the library—while  
He sprang from his bed with a naughty smile.

## IX

All was dark on the upper stairs,  
And by his wee little cot, unawares,  
He stumbled on the rocking-horse back,  
And clutched madly at its mane for lack  
Of other support, until to this day  
You can see the place where the hair's pulled  
away.

And yet his purpose still did uphold,  
As one often sees in th' unpolished gold

Of childhood set a wonderful stone  
Of character, dazzling the eye alone ;  
But down stairs it was very bright,  
And the library, too, was lit that night.

## X

And all was light in the parlors—all light  
In the windows resting against the night ;  
And the flowers there were as fresh and green  
As the meadows breed them 'neath morning  
    sheen,  
And the vases stood tall with their patterns fair,  
And the spirit of dancing was on the air,  
And the great old chairs of the family heart  
Were gone from the salons. In every part  
Naught was to be seen of a family sign  
But women and men and costumes fine,  
While in the centre of all this stood  
The woman who dreaded motherhood.

## XI

The woman who dreaded motherhood smiled,  
And the deep, rich mass of her long hair piled  
In affected carelessness on her head,  
As she nodded, let loose a ringlet as red  
With a brilliant gold as any flower  
That mellows the fields within summer's hour.

And everyone said that her mouth, like the  
moon,  
Had a mystical curve on the end, and would  
swoon  
Into a laugh with the magical charm  
Of moody midsummer nights, which alarm  
By darkness, and then are with moonlight  
beguiled,  
While the woman who dreaded motherhood  
smiled.

## XII

But the little boy passed the parlors, too,  
Upon his way to the library, thro'  
Perhaps losing his way, or perhaps by the glare,  
Or perhaps it was only because aware  
Of brilliance and gaiety hid from sight  
Behind the curtains, he felt that night  
A little curiosity—when  
He was harshly told by the butler that “men  
Only sit up.” But when, bye and bye,  
He saw a strange lady and started to fly,  
He found himself at the library door,  
His bare feet treading upon the floor.

### XIII

Had the little boy sailed over distant seas  
In magic ships unto far countries,  
And seen the myriad sights of the world,  
No more of wonderment could be held  
Within the large of his eyes sky shade,  
Than the lights and the music that night had  
made.

But soon he found by the bookcase old  
The book where the goblin tale was told.  
Then someone came through the door—his  
mother—

And someone with her—not father—nor  
brother—

And they stopped, and their voice had a tremu-  
lous tone ;

For you know, they thought themselves alone.  
But the little boy, buried within his book,  
Had a chance when he heard the train rustle to  
look.

And then it was, after a moment of fright,  
He thought he would have an adventure that  
night.

So the little boy came by the corner to peek,  
When he saw something fall on the pink of her  
cheek,

And then, growing bolder, he went all the way  
To the table, as fearless as if it were day.  
But a mouse, or something strange, that he saw  
Made him quickly again withdraw,  
And he waited breathless behind the case  
Till a wicked book fell with a thud from its place.

#### XIV

And then—how is it that born within  
A woman's breast nor sorrow, nor sin,  
Nor petty life, nor selfish thought  
Can kill the motherhood instinct wrought  
By the Creator? But ever there,  
Sometime or other, its wings will stir,  
And bear the feeling over the soul  
That makes a womanhood great and whole!  
And how was it that the little boy lay  
On her arm, as he had not for many a day,  
And good night fell from her lips unaware  
To the someone gazing with love at her?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### XV

The little boy grew and he went to school,  
And found in his heart that the measured rule



Of hour and moment and lesson and strife  
(Tho' he hated the work) was the substance  
of life.

His clever mind grew, as with all little boys,  
To express the usual sorrows and joys—  
But perhaps a little more keenly ; for he  
Had seen as a child more than others could see.  
While the woman who dreaded motherhood  
smiled,  
Now and then, from a true-hearted pride in her  
child.









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